

ANNEX U Next of Kin TO JRTC & Fort Polk STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Meeting the Next of Kin

- a. Identify yourself to the NOK; for example: "I am Captain John McCarthy from Company A, 1d Battalion, 9ⁿ Infantry Regiment.
- b. Ensure you are speaking to the correct person(s). For example, "Are you Mr. Tommy L. Jones? Are you the father of Sergeant Robert L. Jones"?
- c. If at least one person to be notified is home, state that you have an important message to deliver and ask permission to enter the residence. For example, "I have an important message to deliver from the Secretary of the Army, may I come in, Mr. Jones."

2. The Notification

- a. Do not hurry, be as natural as possible in speech, manner, and method of delivery.
- b. Convey one of the following scripts to the NOK (without reading from script):
 - (1) For death cases: "The Secretary of the Army has asked me to express his deep regret that your (relationship; son, Robert or husband, Edward; etc.) (died/was killed in action) in (country/state) on (date). (State the circumstances provided by the Casualty Area Command.) The Secretary extends his deepest sympathy to you and your family in your tragic loss."
 - (2) For missing cases: "The Secretary of the Army has asked me to inform you that your (relationship; son, John or daughter, Janet; etc.) has been reported (DUSTWUN/Missing/Missing in action) in (country/state) since (date). (State the circumstances provided by the Casualty Area Command.) When we receive more information, you will be promptly notified. The Secretary extends his deepest sympathy to you and your family during this trying period."
 - (3) For deaths resulting from friendly fire: "The Secretary of the Army has asked me to express his deep regret that your (relationship) (died/was killed in action) in (country) on (date). State the circumstances). His/her death is result of suspected friendly fire. A formal investigation is being conducted. You will be further advised as additional information is received. The Secretary extends his deepest sympathy to you and your family in your tragic loss."
 - (4) For deaths - positive identification not complete: "The Secretary of the Army has asked me to express his deep regret that your (Relationship of deceased to NOK - son, daughter, husband) is believed to (have died) or (been killed in action) on (date of death), at (location). A body matching (Soldiers Name) description was found in (location). Cause of death at this time is under investigation. The local authorities are currently trying to establish positive identification. You will be notified as soon as identification has been established. The Secretary extends his deepest sympathy to you and your family during this trying period".
- c. Do not extend overly sympathetic gestures that may be taken the wrong way. Use good judgment by not passing gory or embarrassing details.

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d. IMPORTANT! Do not physically touch the NOK in any manner unless there is shock or fainting. Summon medical assistance immediately, if necessary.

e. Be alert to any adverse reaction to the news. If there are no other adult members of the family at home and the news produces a shock, it may be helpful for someone to be with the next of kin. If so, ask, "is there anything I can do?", or "May I call someone or ask a neighbor to step in to assist?"

f. Ensure the NOK is informed of the following

(1) In death cases, advise the PNOK that the Army has various disposition options, benefits, and allowances available and they should delay making any decisions on care and preparation of the remains until they have been fully briefed by the mortuary officer or the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO).

(2) You need to verify the NOK's complete name, telephone number, and a 45day mailing address at this time. (Complete the attached DA Form XXXX-R (Record of Casualty Notification Actions).

(3) The CAO will contact the PNOK within 24 hours. He will arrange for a personal visit at their convenience (PNOK only).

(4) Personal notification will be made to the SNOK

(5) A letter, which will give more details, will be coming from the soldier's commander.

(6) They will receive a confirming telegram/mailgram confirming the information you have passed.

g. Information you should no discuss

(1) Specific questions on subjects, such as insurance, death gratuity, final pay, autopsies or investigations, etc. If asked, advise the NOK that the CAO will discuss these subjects with the PNOK.

(2) Details on mortuary affairs.

(3) Personal effects of the soldier.

(4) Questions relating to line of duty, neglect, errors of judgment or the responsibility of other personnel concerned with the incident.

(5) Your prior experiences or personal conjecture.

(6) In short, limit your discussion to information contained in the message you delivered and DO NOT DISCUSS MATTERS THAT YOU ARE NOT QUALIFIED TO DISCUSS.

6. The Departure

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a. Stay with NOK as long as needed, but depart the residence professionally, as soon as possible.

b. Announce your departure from the residence, for example, "Mr. Jones, I must be returning to my unit, again, on behalf of the Secretary of the Army, please accept the United States Army's deepest condolences".

7. After the Notification: Immediately after departure from the residence and before returning home, telephone the CAC and advise them of

a. Approximate time of notification.

b. Confirmed address.

c. Home telephone number(s) where NOK can be contacted.

d. Any unusual events or comments by the NOK

e. Notify the CAC of any NOK address changes that may effect other notification actions.